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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 22, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 22, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

OZGUR GUNDEM: A bomb explosion took place on Friday (05/19) in a trash can located in front of the apartment building where Sabahattin Suvagci, former DEHAP (Democratic People's Party) provincial chairperson, has been living in Hakkari. No casualties have been reported. The daily hints that bombings are being orchestrated to refute claims that bombings in the region that took place in the second half of 2005 abruptly stopped when defendants of Semdinli case were arrested. PKK, according to the paper, had already denied any links with the May 3 bombing incident this year in Hakkari, which targeted a school bus. That bombing, the daily hints, has reportedly already been used by the defendants themselves in a May 4 court session to prove that bombings did not abruptly stop following arrest of Semdinli case defendants.

EVRENSEL / EKSPRES / BOLGE: A tragic accident took place when a truck, which was carrying trafficked Afghani and Bangladeshi nationals, hit another truck on the road between Gaziantep and Adana on Friday (05/19). Forty-three people were killed and 4 people were wounded as a result of the accident.

RADIKAL: Ankara Governor's Office demanded twenty-three amendments to the charter of the Association for Academic Research and Kurdish Democracy Forum on grounds that some items violated the Turkish constitution's clauses against separatism.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The PKK claimed that six soldiers and a village guard died during military operations going on in Diyarbakir, Mardin and Hakkari provinces.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Foreign national delegates of the 5th ICAD (International Conference Against Disappearances) in Diyarbakir have reportedly been baffled by reported police activities such as recording events during the conference, obtaining identity information of the disappeared people who delivered talks during the conference, and barring the closing date of the conference.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: A campaign has been launched recently to gather signatures from people in support of Diyarbakir's Sur District Mayor Abdullah Demirbas. A lawsuit was brought against Demirbas for submitting an article called "Municipalities and Local Administrations in the Light of Multi-Language Environments" to European Social Forum in Vienna. Separately, an investigation has begun against Cevdet Konak, Hozat district mayor in Tunceli, reportedly because of a speech he delivered at a festival in Germany.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Thousands, including Nusaybin mayor, authors of the weekly Kurdish language newspaper Azadiya Welat, DTP Nusaybin administrators, Egitim-Sen (Teacher's Union) members, SES (Health Laborers' Union) members, BES (Laborers' Union) members, attended a concert which was organized by Mardin's Nusaybin Municipality. Police, reportedly seized green-yellow-red colored scarves from women and demanded copies of the identities of two musicians.

OZGUR GUNDEM: An investigation has been started against seven people including DTP Nizip district chairperson in Sanliurfa on charges that they "praised criminals" and "chanted illegal slogans" during a January 25 dated youth festival in Sanliurfa's Birecik district.

CUMHURIYET / EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Local DTP congresses have been held in Van, Mardin, Adana and Sanliurfa provinces. Ibrahi Sunkur, Ferhat Turk (currently under arrest), Kerem Ugur and Ibrahim Binici have been elected provincial chairmen of Van, Mardin, Adana and Sanliurfa provinces respectively. Yesterday DTP also held two congresses in Diyarbakir and Istanbul. DTP co-chairperson Aysel Tugluk made a call to authorities to act more bravely to reach a democratic solution for the Kurdish problem in Diyarbakir.

YENI SAFAK / ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM: A 4.8-magnitude earthquake hit Bitlis and Siirt yesterday morning. The epicenter of the earthquake is reportedly Bitlis's Hizan district. No casualties or material damage has been reported.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The ministry of education in England has reportedly begun revising its policies about languages being taught at schools in England. Among current discussion topics are integrating new languages in school programs including Kurdish language and its dialects.

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YENI SAFAK / RADIKAL / BOLGE / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Gaziantep Security Directorate conducted operations and seized four undocumented shotguns, six cartridges, and 385 bullets in a business place and a storage house in Gaziantep. Thirty-six tons of smuggled diesel fuel, 65 kilograms of smuggled tea, and 100 kilograms of sugar have also been seized. A total of 26 people, five of whom were customs officers, have been detained during the operations and police have started monitoring the Kilis border gate closely.

RADIKAL: A bee keeper, who opened fire in the air thinking that a wild animal entered his apiary, was shot dead by security officers who mistook the bee keeper for a terrorist in the dead of the night in Erzincan's Pulumur district.

EVRENSEL: Adana branch of Chamber of Electrical Engineers (CEE) held a panel against nuclear power plants. Tuncay Ozkul, CEE chairperson; Tacidar Seyhan, CHP deputy from Adana; a nuclear engineer, CEE board president and member engineers attended the panel discussion.

EKSPRES: AGIMAD (Clothing Brands Association in Adana) will protest the Industrial and Commercial Fair of Adana this year and 22 companies under the umbrella of the association will boycott the fair unless the organizers of the fair are chosen from among more professional companies.

ZAMAN / BOLGE / EKSPRES: With the coming of wheat harvest in the Cukurova region, the farmers are reportedly expecting the government to announce incentives to support wheat buying. Fethi Coskuntuncel, Chairperson of Adana Commodity Exchange, said that the government should provide regional incentives for wheat buying instead of buying wheat from the farmers; a measure which would trigger self generated agricultural planning, according to Coskuntuncel.

SABAH (GUNEY): Efforts reportedly gained momentum in

Gaziantep as the day for the International Iraqi Fair, which will be held on June 7, neared.

SABAH (GUNEY): Hatay Governor Ahmet Kayhan said that the bidding process of the airport project for Hatay had begun and the airport would be completed in the following year.

EVRENSEL: Youth for Labor group in Diyarbakir remembered Deniz Gezmis, a young leftist student leader of the 1970s and his friends, who were hung by a military tribunal in 1972 in Turkey, on the 34th anniversary of their execution.

ZAMAN: PM Erdogan met with Deputy Secretary of State in Egypt's Sharm El-Sheikh city where World Economic Forum is being held. Erdogan sent a message to the U.S. to start fighting against the PKK.

CUMHURİYET: Patriotic Front against Imperialism protested in Hatay's Iskenderun district the reported U.S. aspirations to use the port of Iskenderun as a military base.

CUMHURİYET: Seven terrorists, who were caught in an operation conducted in Nigde province on May 16, have been arraigned and arrested. The terrorists are reportedly members of TKP-ML TIKKO (Liberation Army of the Workers and Peasants of Turkey) terrorist organization.
WILSON